

INSPECTION REPORT

ROCK FERRY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Birkenhead

LEA area: Wirral

Unique reference number: 105045

Headteacher: Mrs J Lambeth

Lead inspector: Mr P T Hill

Dates of inspection: 14th – 16th June 2004

Inspection number: 257341

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Type of school: | Primary |
| School category: | Community |
| Age range of pupils: | 3 – 11 |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| Number on roll: | 312 |
| School address: | Ionic Street Rock Ferry Birkenhead Merseyside |
| Postcode: | CH42 2BL |
| Telephone number: | 0151 645 1017 |
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| Appropriate authority: | Local Education Authority |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mrs B Oakley |
| Date of previous inspection: | 23 rd March 1998 |

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Rock Ferry Primary School is a well-established urban school one mile from the town centre of Birkenhead. Currently there are 278 full-time pupils between the ages of five and eleven on roll. There are 34 part-time three and four year olds in the nursery. The school also houses a unit for pupils with statements of special educational need to address their moderate learning difficulties. Currently 12 pupils attend this unit. Housing associations own a large proportion of the surrounding accommodation. Since the last inspection there has been a marked decline in the socio-economic make-up of the area with a high level of pupil mobility and a significant number of children exhibiting challenging behaviour. The majority of pupils come from backgrounds that are well below average in social and economic terms. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic groups and all pupils speak English as their first language. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is 72 per cent, which is well above the average for schools nationally. Over a third of pupils in the main school have been identified as having special educational needs. This is well above average. Attainment on entry to the nursery is very low in comparison with the national average including, for many pupils, social skills and language development.

The school achieved the Investor in People award in 2000 and is part of the Education Action Zone, Excellence in Cities and Sure Start initiatives.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team | | | Subject responsibilities |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 6642 | Mr P Hill | Lead inspector | Science Information and communication technology Geography History English as an additional language |
| 1112 | Mr P Oldfield | Lay inspector | |
| 32926 | Mrs P Hilling-Smith | Team inspector | Art and design Music Religious education |
| 15015 | Mr M Wehrmeyer | Team inspector | Foundation Stage English Physical education |
| 30745 | Mrs P Thorpe | Team inspector | Mathematics Design and technology |
| 11642 | Mrs C Parkinson | Team inspector | Special educational needs |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good effective school, working successfully in challenging circumstances. It has many strengths. Children start school with very low levels of attainment, and, although standards are below the national average by the age of eleven, all pupils, including the high percentage with special educational needs, achieve well. Teaching and learning are both good and there is a significant amount of very good and some excellent teaching. Leadership and management by the headteacher are very good. **This is a very inclusive and caring school**. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Leadership by the headteacher is very good.
- Teaching is good, resulting in good learning.
- Pupils achieve well and have very good attitudes to school and their work.
- Inclusion and the provision for pupils with special educational needs are very good.
- Pupils are well cared for and supported.
- Considerable improvements have been made throughout the school and especially in the provision for the use of information and communication technology.
- Standards of attainment in mathematics, science and especially English, including those of speaking and listening, are below national expectations.
- The consistency of systems for tracking pupils' day-to-day progress needs improvement.

The school has made good progress since its last inspection in March 1998. All the key areas for development have been effectively addressed and improved. The school has very successfully developed and improved the range of teaching strategies and schemes of work are in place for all subjects. Assessment of pupils' work, and the subsequent analysis and use of the findings to improve standards, is good although the tracking of pupils' day-to-day progress and their level of attainment remains an area for further development. Besides meeting the issues of the last inspection the school has made considerable improvements in much of its provision, including accommodation and resources for learning.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

| Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with: | all schools | | | similar schools |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2003 |
| English | E | E* | E* | E* |
| mathematics | E* | E | E* | E |
| science | E | E | E* | E |

*Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Pupils' achievement is good overall. The above table shows the results in national tests for eleven year olds in 2003. The standards attained were very low and were in the bottom 5 per cent nationally. **The provisional results for eleven year olds for 2004 show a very significant improvement on those of last year.** The comparison with similar schools is not reliable in that it does not take into account the complexity of the issues facing the school, for example very high levels of pupils entitled to free school meals, high levels of pupils with special educational needs and a very high level of social and economic disadvantage in the area. The poor showing in the 2003 tests resulted from a combination of circumstances which have been fully explored by the school. A major factor, peculiar to 2003 tests, was the poor behaviour of a small number of Year 6 boys. Action

has been taken to ensure that, as far as possible, standards have improved. This is clearly working and the inspection found that standards, although still below average, have improved considerably and that behaviour is good throughout the school. Pupils enter the school with very low levels of skill and make good progress as they move through the school. Although standards are below average by the end of Key Stage 1, as with Key Stage 2 results, they are improving. **Pupils of all ages achieve well.**

Pupils' personal development is good and is very well supported through the good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. **Pupils have very positive attitudes towards learning and are very happy at school.** Their behaviour in lessons and at playtimes is good. Attendance has improved and is now in line with the national average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good education. Teaching is good throughout the school. As a result of good teaching, supported by very good relationships and classroom and behaviour management, learning is good with pupils making good progress. The quality of assessment is good and information is well used to match lessons to the needs of pupils and to improve standards, although tracking of pupils' day-to-day progress is an area for improvement. The curriculum is good and is enriched through a range of additional experiences and activities. The care, support and guidance of pupils are good and a significant and very positive factor in all aspects of the school's work. Partnership with parents is good and the school works hard to involve them in their children's learning. Links with other local schools are very good and links with the community are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are both good. The **very good** leadership of the headteacher, well supported by other senior managers, gives the school a clear sense of direction and a determination to improve. This has been the key area that has led to the good level of improvement that the school has made since the last inspection and, more especially, during the last year. **Governance of the school is good**, with governors acting purposefully as critical friends of the school; they have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and carry out their statutory duties well.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Overall, parents are very supportive of the school and are very satisfied with its work. They have no significant concerns. Pupils like coming to school and enjoy lessons. They feel secure and very well cared for.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- Raise standards of attainment in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.
- Develop systems for tracking of pupils' day-to-day progress and their level of attainment, integrating this with the already good systems in place.

The school is very aware of the need to develop pupils' language, especially writing, and has already put important strategies in place. This will have an overall impact on standards. The school also recognises that the next steps in the development of monitoring and assessment of pupils' work are in tracking their day-to-day progress.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

All pupils, regardless of background or ability, achieve well. However, standards attained by Year 6 pupils are **below the national average**. Included in the school is a Key Stage 2 special needs unit providing for 15 pupils with moderate learning difficulties. Pupils attend the school from a large area of the local education authority. This makes comparison with similar schools unreliable and comparison with national averages has to take the nature of the school's overall intake into account.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and make good progress as they move through the school.
- Pupils with special needs achieve well.
- Attainment of pupils is below average overall.
- Improvement in standards since the poor results of 2003 tests has been good. Provisional test results for eleven year olds for 2004 show a considerable improvement.
- A significant number of pupils have restricted use of language and many have some difficulty in expressing themselves clearly, especially in written work.

Commentary

1. The majority of pupils enter the school with levels of attainment which are very low when compared with the national average and which are very variable from year to year. By the time they leave they have attained levels, which, while still below average, have improved, and they have made good progress as they move through the school. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are gifted and talented have made good progress and achieved well. The progress of, and provision for, pupils with special educational needs is detailed later in this report. English language and literacy skills, particularly writing, are below average overall and this has a negative effect on pupils' standards and progress in other subjects of the curriculum. The school is fully aware of this situation and has a number of strategies to develop pupils' skills.
2. Overall, all pupils achieve well throughout the school in English, mathematics, science and all other subjects inspected. There is no area of the curriculum in which pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. In all subjects, pupils of all abilities achieve well because of the skilful and very effective way that teachers meet individual needs, for example in their questioning techniques and in the work set for pupils. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well throughout the school. Again, this is because of good teaching support, careful use of individual education plans and help from outside agencies. Similarly, those pupils who are particularly able are presented with additional challenges that ensure they are extended in their learning, for example in ICT and mathematics.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| reading | 13.6 (13.9) | 15.7 (15.8) |
| writing | 12.7 (11.9) | 14.6 (14.4) |
| mathematics | 15.2 (14.3) | 16.3 (16.5) |

There were 37 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. The table above shows that standards, by the end of Year 2 in 2003, were well below the national average in all three areas. However, considering the very low average levels of attainment of pupils when they enter the school, this represents a good level of achievement overall.
4. The table below shows that, in 2003, standards for all pupils in the tests at the end of Year 6 were very low in English, mathematics and science. The poor performance in the national tests was very disappointing for the school. Careful analysis of results has highlighted a number of contributory factors which led to attainment being below expectation. The school recognises a huge underperformance of some pupils due in large measure to factors outside the school's control, for example pupil absence at the time of the tests and some family disruption. The poor behaviour of a number of Year 6 boys was also a major factor in the poor overall statistics against which the school is measured.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| English | 20.8 (23.0) | 26.8 (27.0) |
| mathematics | 22.4 (23.6) | 26.8 (26.7) |
| science | 25.0 (25.9) | 28.6 (28.3) |

There were 38 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

5. However, the evidence from the inspection shows that pupils' attainment, whilst still below average, is significantly higher than that indicated in the 2003 test results. This is borne out by the provisional test results for eleven year olds for 2004 which are a considerable improvement over 2003. The overall improvements represent a considerable accomplishment on the part of the school, especially as, in some classes, there is a significant number of pupils with special educational needs. There is no overall significant difference between the standards attained by boys and girls although girls performed better than boys in the 2003 tests.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance is now in line with the national average; most pupils are very keen to attend school and arrive punctually.

Pupils' attitudes throughout the school are **very good** and they show a keenness to work. The pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is **good**. Behaviour is **good overall**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has very good systems in place for promoting attendance.
- Pupils display very good attitudes towards school.
- Behaviour throughout the school is good from the majority of pupils.
- Pupils have a very good moral understanding and can distinguish right from wrong.

Commentary

6. The school has very good systems in place for promoting attendance. Levels of attendance are now much closer to the national average, and punctuality is generally good. Unauthorised absence is lower than the national average because the school contacts homes to establish the reasons for absence on the first day. This is bringing good results.

7. Most pupils have good attitudes to school and are keen to learn. The school has provided very good opportunities for pupils to take an active part in school life. Pupils take on a variety of duties such as playground buddies or helping infants at lunch. All pupils very willingly undertake a number of jobs, for example being register monitors. The well-established school council meets very regularly and is very well supported by staff. Ideas for improvements to the school are considered on a daily basis. Pupils are very happy at the school; they enjoy very good relationships with others and develop confidence and self-esteem because they are highly valued by all adults in the school.
8. Behaviour overall in lessons is good and pupils often display very good behaviour. Behaviour at break and lunchtime is generally very good because teachers are in close support and at lunchtimes experienced supervisors are always at hand. Lunchtime supervisors have a system of handing out green cards to reward and recognise good behaviour or helpful relationships to others. These cards are highly valued by pupils. Pupils observe the rules of the dining room and playground and expect other pupils to follow them; this creates very good relationships.
9. Expectations of good behaviour are very clear. The very effective behaviour management system results in all pupils generally respecting the boundaries. Minor incidents of misbehaviour are well recorded and such incidents are dealt with effectively by class teachers. The head teacher is the very effective manager of these systems and liaises with parents when necessary.
10. Class rules are clearly displayed and have been discussed with pupils and agreed with them. A pupils' questionnaire indicated that a number of pupils believed that they were sometimes bullied in the playground. No such incidents were seen in inspection week. The school has taken very positive action in this area. There are now playground buddies in place who are readily available at 'friendship stops' in the playground. All pupils are highly valued and relationships, particularly with all adults, are so very positive that most pupils abide by the high expectations and clear rules.
11. There have been eight temporary exclusions in the current school year, in a total of 15½ days (all boys). On five occasions one pupil has needed this support. A professional agency has indicated that the school manages this requirement very well.
12. The school provides very good opportunities for all pupils, sometimes from challenging backgrounds, and values their contribution to school life.
13. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall with moral understanding especially being very good. Pupils clearly understand right from wrong. Very good assemblies make an important contribution in this area. Generally, very good relationships exist throughout the school. Break times enhance these relationships where older pupils share games equipment and play games of football or walk in the garden area with friends. Pupils' personal development is very well monitored; the personal and social education programme also contributes very well to personal development. Pupils respect their own and others' cultural traditions. The achievement of children in reception classes is very good in personal, social and emotional development.
14. Pupils with special educational needs have good attitudes to their work, and their values and other personal qualities are developed well. They like school and the support they receive helps them to improve their self-esteem and to be able to work more independently. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties have clear guidelines and this helps them respond well to the school's code of conduct.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

| Authorised absence | | Unauthorised absence | |
|--------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| School data | 4.7 | School data | 0.3 |
| National data | 5.4 | National data | 0.4 |

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

| |
|---------------------------------------------|
| Categories used in the Annual School Census |
| White – British |

Exclusions in the last school year

| No of pupils on roll | Number of fixed period exclusions | Number of permanent exclusions |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 278 | 4 | 3 |

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good** and in a fifth of lessons are **very good**. Some teaching is **excellent**. This represents an improvement in teaching and learning since the previous inspection. Throughout the school, teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and of their behaviour. All pupils are encouraged to work hard and pupils are given clear guidance about how they might improve their work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have high expectations of pupils.
- Teachers' planning is very good.
- Teacher knowledge is very good.
- The use of homework to extend pupils' learning needs to be further developed.
- Assessment procedures for pupil tracking over the short term are an area for improvement.

Commentary

15. Teachers consistently require pupils to maintain high standards of behaviour. Pupils are set clear guidelines and know that they will be rewarded with merits in class and recognised during the very good and effective merit assemblies. Pupils who receive awards in assembly wear badges to indicate their achievements.
16. Teachers develop a very good ethos for learning during lessons, make maximum use of lesson time and ensure interruptions are minimal. This enables pupils to work uninterrupted for sustained periods and promotes pupils' perseverance and productivity in their learning.
17. Pupils in all classes work hard. They take pride in their work and are very willing to talk about and comment on what they have done and learned. Pupils receive considerable encouragement from teachers and classroom support assistants and have very good relationships with them. In the special needs unit relationships are excellent and pupils try hard to meet the expectations set for them by the teacher and support assistant. These features underpin the good and very good learning that takes place throughout the school.

18. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach and understand how to engage pupils' interest and they encourage pupils particularly well. Teachers' explanations are pitched at the right level to meet individual needs and good use is made of technical vocabulary based on their good subject knowledge. Teachers plan work that is well matched to pupils' abilities, so that pupils are able to make good or very good progress in their learning.
19. The procedures for assessment to respond to needs in individual pupils' attainment and monitoring the progress they make have both been improved since the previous inspection. They are now good in the Foundation Stage. Teachers' plans are modified on a weekly basis based on pupil achievement in lessons. However, there is not an effective whole-school system of day-to-day tracking and record keeping for teachers to decide pupils' levels of attainment and to set short-term targets for individuals and groups. Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly and positively, often including written comments that help strengthen pupils' understanding and this coupled with information pupils receive in lessons means that they have a good understanding of how to improve.
20. Assessment procedures in core subjects of English, mathematics and science are based on National Curriculum levels attributed to the planned learning activities. These records clearly show those pupils who have either not met or exceeded national expectations. Assessment in the Foundation Stage is good and tracking documents are developing in conjunction with work being carried out in the local education authority.
21. Pupils with special educational needs are well taught. Teachers use support assistants well and plan suitable work so that pupils achieve well. While assessment and tracking are satisfactory, more effective day-to-day systems would help pinpoint pupils' difficulties even more precisely, and help them to improve their rate of progress.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 41 lessons

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very poor |
|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 2 (5%) | 10 (24%) | 26 (62%) | 3 (7%) | 0 | 0 | 0 |

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

The curriculum

The school offers a **good** curriculum, which develops pupils' knowledge, experience and learning skills beyond the school day and within the community. Lessons are well planned and suitably challenge pupils of different levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs. Overall the good quality of the accommodation and resources contributes significantly to the school's curriculum. However, outdoor play area for pupils in parts of the Foundation Stage is limited.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school offers a good range of extra-curricular activities. Many of these activities are particularly successful in the promotion of pupils' personal and social education.
- The curriculum is very inclusive and all pupils have very good access to all that the school has to offer.
- The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are used well and result in improved standards of attainment in English and mathematics.
- Resources and accommodation are generally good. Resources for ICT are very good and have helped to improve standards of attainment.

Commentary

22. The curriculum is well planned to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum and the needs of the pupils in the school. A strong emphasis is placed on the development of pupils' personal and social educational skills, health education and spiritual, social and moral education as well subject knowledge and understanding. The school works hard to provide a balanced education for the very diverse nature of its pupils and to ensure a very inclusive environment where pupils have a very good level of equality of opportunity.
23. The curriculum is well enhanced and enriched through a wide variety of additional activities including artists in residence, physical education coaches, and music specialists. The school has a good partnership with the Education Action Zone (EAZ) and plans many of these enriching activities in conjunction with the EAZ.
24. Teachers plan very well to meet pupils' individual needs and to ensure the secure delivery of the National Curriculum. Curriculum policies are in place and schemes of work are modified appropriately to meet the school's needs. The teamwork and joint planning between teachers are especially strong and ensure that pupils of the same age have equal access to subject content.
25. Teachers use the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies flexibly and well. Pupils' writing skills are an area which the school has identified as in need of further development and this has been made a priority area across the curriculum. The curriculum enables pupils to make good use of literacy and numeracy skills within other subjects, for example in science where numerical data is recorded with care and the results then presented in graphical form. Pupils are encouraged to use their speaking and listening skills in a variety of contexts, including circle time, as well as in subjects. The school now provides good opportunities for pupils to use investigative skills, previously seen as an area for development in science. This has resulted in a noticeable confidence in pupils' contributions to lessons and pupils' improved standards in science.
26. The curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The provision outlined in statements of special educational need is made effectively and pupils' skills and behaviour improve as a result. Individual education plans are clear and show evidence of planning between different members of staff to provide well for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils are well supported in class. They have suitable resources and receive effective, unobtrusive support. Pupils spoken to were able to explain what they were doing and how they were improving their work. The co-ordinator for special educational needs works closely with staff, and teachers are easily able to obtain support and advice for pupils with special educational needs.
27. The good quality and range of resources have a positive impact on learning and on improvements in standards of attainment. There are very good resources for ICT. Two interactive whiteboard rooms and an ICT suite are used to good effect, particularly in teaching specific skills.
28. The school accommodation is bright and well cared for. Rooms are generally large enough for investigative and experimental work as well as for making in design and technology etc. The school management has placed a considerable and successful emphasis on improving the fabric of the school, including new windows, play areas and a refurbished dining hall. Physical education facilities are currently being improved through the building of a new 'Sports Barn'. Children in parts of the Foundation Stage have only limited access to an outdoor play area, a situation of which the school is well aware.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides a **good** standard of care and looks after pupils **very well**. Pupils feel secure and are able to express their views, particularly through the school council and through the personal

and social education programme. Pupils' personal development is very well catered for by all members of staff.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides high levels of care and has a high regard for health and safety.
- Very effective induction arrangements allow children to settle very well.
- Pupils' views are much valued, helping to raise confidence and self-esteem.

Commentary

29. The school's procedures for ensuring the safety and well-being of pupils are good. Staff have good basic first aid knowledge, appropriate well-trained designated first aiders are readily available, and minor injuries are well recorded. The equipment and site are regularly checked and tested, and any concerns are dealt with very well. Child protection procedures are very well understood by staff; the headteacher discharges the supervision of this important aspect of care very well. The school has good systems in place to offer support and guidance for those pupils with special educational needs and close liaison is maintained with a large range of support agencies, to ensure pupils' specific needs are fully met. Attendance is very well monitored.
30. Induction arrangements for children are good so that they feel happy and secure when first joining the school. Older pupils have an appointed 'friend' to help and guide them around the school. When pupils join they are given a sailing boat to add their name to, which is placed upon an attractive display in the entrance. They 'sail' upon the river of school life!
31. The school values and encourages pupils' views. It has a system, using a suggestions box, which is opened each day. If any pupil has a worry or need, it is dealt with very quickly. The very effective school council meets very regularly and articulates views about school life. These are taken very seriously by the school. Pupils thus feel confident their views are heard and acted upon. When the school conducted a survey of pupils for their concerns and needs, a very high number of pupils indicated that if they were unhappy at school there was always an adult to look after them.
32. This is a very caring school where pupils' views are welcomed. Pupils can contribute to new ideas and initiatives, for example the special helpers and buddy system, now well established in the school. Teachers and other adults know the needs of the pupils very well and provide very good personal support. Academic support is consistent, based upon updated information as they move through the school from the nursery to Year 6.
33. Pupils with special educational needs are well cared for. The liaison with outside agencies to further help and support them is very good.
34. The good provision for care, guidance and support detailed in the last report has been well maintained.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a good and successful partnership with parents and keeps them well informed. There are strong links with the community and very good links with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good links with parents and the community support learning well.
- There are very good links with other schools.

Commentary

35. The school provides parents with good information about the school and good opportunities for parents to discuss their children's attainment and progress. Regular newsletters provide good quality information about the work of the school, as do the school brochure and governors' annual report. This information allows parents to be fully aware of the work of the school. Many parents are very happy to entrust their children to the school; however, support for some of the school events is often limited. Class assemblies, and Christmas productions, are well supported by parents. A family support worker is based at the school.
36. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed about their children's progress. Liaison with other schools, and arrangements for moving from one stage of education to the next, are good.
37. The school is at the heart of the community: It is the meeting place of the Residents Association which has generously provided a donation to the school. There are established Adult Education classes and Family Learning opportunities. The parents' association, although small in numbers, has provided very good support to the school.
38. A well-developed link has been established with receiving secondary schools. Teachers from these schools visit and interview pupils who will transfer, providing them with information and allaying any of their fears. The school offers work experience opportunities for some secondary school pupils.
39. Although some parents had concerns about bullying, inspection evidence indicates that the school has good procedures to deal with these matters. A very high number of parents who returned the questionnaire said that they liked the school and its work.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the headteacher, well supported by other key staff, are both **good** and have played a crucial role in the **good** progress that the school has made recently. The very disappointing results in the 2003 national tests have been analysed and decisive action taken, resulting in a good level of improvement. Governance is **good**, with governors playing an active role in the life of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is very well led by the headteacher, who sets high standards for all pupils and staff.
- Governors play a full part in helping to shape the direction of the school.
- All staff work well together as a team and are committed to enabling each pupil to achieve as well as possible.
- The school's commitment to inclusion and equality of opportunity for all is very good and a significant strength.
- The high percentage of pupils with special educational needs is well cared for and they achieve well; the leadership and management of special educational needs are very good.
- The procedures for checking the performance of the school are very strong.

Commentary

40. The leadership by the headteacher, her clarity of vision, sense of purpose and her determination to improve all aspects of the school for the benefit of all pupils, are very good. She is totally committed to raising standards, especially in the light of the disappointing results attained in the national tests of 2003. The changes needed to improve standards in a relatively short time have been inspired by the headteacher's considerable energy and vision. She is well supported by staff and governors with teamwork being very good. As a result of her very good leadership and

careful monitoring and analysis of teaching and learning, standards have improved. Standards seen in lessons and in pupils' books show a significant improvement over those attained last year.

41. Governors are very actively involved in the life of the school and in the school improvement planning process. Consequently, they have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and carry out their statutory duties well. They are very supportive but also willing to challenge the senior management team. This is valued by the head as this brings an objective view of the school's work. The school improvement plan is thorough and enables the school to measure accurately the progress made towards its targets. There are very good procedures for monitoring and evaluating the school's work. This has enabled the school to set realistic targets for improvement in English, mathematics and science. The senior management team and subject co-ordinators monitor colleagues' planning, sample pupils' work and, where possible, undertake lesson observations to check the quality of teaching and learning through the school.
42. The school is very inclusive and makes every effort to ensure equality of opportunity for all its pupils. Given the very diverse nature of the school's intake, with a high percentage of pupils with special educational needs and a significant number of pupils who are vulnerable for one reason or another, this is a very positive aspect of the school's work and is very well managed.
43. The leadership and management of special educational needs are very good. The co-ordinator for special educational needs has a clear strategic view of how to improve provision, ensures that the statutory requirements of pupils with statements are met, and uses statistics well to analyse the needs of different groups of pupils in the school. Arrangements for annual reviews, links with outside agencies, early identification of pupils with special educational needs and relationships with parents are very well managed and promote pupils' achievements. Staff are given additional training and the school includes its pupils with special educational needs well.
44. The continued professional development of staff is a high priority and is very well managed through the school improvement plan in line with the schools needs. The focus for training has been carefully identified with the raising of standards in mind.
45. The school budget is well managed with efficient systems in place to make sure that the finances are carefully controlled and expenditure regularly reviewed. There is a good understanding of the principles of best value. These are applied well when comparing costs for purchases and their effect on standards attained by pupils. The value that the school places on the well-being of its pupils is reflected in the way money has been spent on the good quality refurbishment of accommodation. Day-to-day administration by the secretary is very good, as are the systems of financial control administered by the school bursar. They oversee these systems well, and also support the running of the school and the work of the teachers in a very efficient way. The school provides good value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

| Income and expenditure (£) | |
|----------------------------|--------|
| Total income | 825408 |
| Total expenditure | 878094 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2969 |

| Balances (£) | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|
| Balance from previous year | 75863 |
| Balance carried forward to the next | 23177 |

SPECIAL NEEDS CLASS FOR CHILDREN WITH MODERATE LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

46. There are 12 pupils attending the 15-place class and they are taught and supported by a full-time teacher and learning support assistant in their own classroom. Pupils are from Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 and may join the class from this or other schools in the area at any point during their education in junior school. They join mainstream classes, when it is appropriate and meets their needs, for all subjects except English and mathematics. Sometimes, pupils from other classes attend the special needs class for additional tuition and support.
47. Pupils' achievements are good. Their capacity to write independently, with greater confidence, and to complete their tasks increases rapidly with additional help. Most pupils have persistent difficulties with concentration, subject-specific vocabulary and basic skills, such as reading, writing and calculation. They make slow but steady progress in these areas because of the very good relationships they have with the adults working with them in class, and the inclusive and supportive attitude and management of the school's systems.
48. Teaching is good, with strengths in assessment and relationships. Lessons are meticulously planned according to the assessment and progress of individual pupils. Staff recognise the difficulties pupils have in generalising information, maintaining concentration if interrupted, and explaining their ideas. Good opportunities are provided to help pupils to develop and improve their capacity in these areas. Expectations of pupils' abilities to learn a wider and more age-appropriate range of skills could, on occasions, be higher and would help to maintain their interest. Expectations of pupils' behaviour and presentation of work are very high and pupils rise to the challenge with goodwill.
49. The curriculum is suitably adapted to match pupils' needs and the pupils' individual education plans are very useful, relevant documents. Resources are good so that pupils have the materials they need to be able to achieve well. The class is about to move to a new room where there will be better access to ICT. This will help pupils to work both collaboratively and independently, and improve their access to the curriculum. Pupils benefit from attending other classes in the school where they can work with a greater number of pupils of their own age, but still receive the support they need to learn.
50. The leadership of the headteacher, the co-ordinator for special educational needs and the teacher in charge of the unit, is very good. All three work together closely so that the aims to include pupils effectively in the school, and to use assessment systems and existing systems for pupils with special educational needs, such as very good individual education plans and annual reviews, are achieved well. There is a consistency in leadership and management so that all staff working with these pupils throughout the school know what is expected of them and pupils receive fair and steady support in all areas of school life. Resources are efficiently and effectively deployed with staff being made aware of time, duties and resources at their disposal and how they should be used. As a result, value for money is good. Staff training is well maintained and relevant.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

51. Provision for learning in the Foundation Stage has improved significantly since the previous inspection. It springs from the shared philosophy of active learning based on structured play, gently becoming more formal as children progress and are ready for increased challenge. During the inspection the well-planned curriculum was observed operating very effectively. The procedures for assessment give the teachers a good hold on children's ability and progress. This enables the staff to plan to meet the needs of individual children very precisely. Children start at the nursery at three points in the school year, according to their birthday. There is one point of transfer into the reception classes. Staff make very good, sensitive arrangements to enable children to settle easily into their first experience of school and for transferring into reception and Year 1.
52. Teaching is consistently good, another significant improvement. The teamwork and cheerful enthusiasm of the staff shine out and create a happy environment where the children thrive. As a consequence children love to learn, explore their environment, make good progress and achieve well, particularly in social and physical development. The outdoor play area is a strong feature of the provision for nursery children, making a secure adventure playground, full of learning and fun. Reception classes do not have their own outdoor area and have only limited access to sharing the nursery area because there are not enough staff to supervise this.
53. Staff have created very good relationships with parents since the previous inspection. Parents are delighted with the 'open door' policy, which gives them much greater contact with teachers. They particularly like the activity days when they join in the learning and fun. In return they were extremely helpful in 'staffing' the farm trip. This was a particularly valuable experience that made a deep impact on the children's memories. Good co-ordination of the Foundation Stage has identified a range of aspects for development. The key item in its action plan is to continue expanding the links with parents and carers.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make good progress.
- A very good range of activities is planned and carried out.
- The teaching and overall staff support are very good.

Commentary

54. Teachers grasp every opportunity to build on children's development. Children achieve particularly well because of very good teaching. Social training is the key plank of the Foundation Stage. The staff use all opportunities to encourage children to understand class routines, for instance in the use of a quiet signal to get all children to attend to the teachers. They encourage good sharing and working co-operatively. The children enter the nursery well below the average level, compared with those found nationally. Through patience and repeated explanations the children adjust to the teachers' high expectations. The children make good progress in this area and by the time they leave reception they are at or near to average for their age. This represents very good achievement.
55. Teachers encourage children to concentrate for increasing lengths of time. They create good opportunities for children to explore the practical activities around the rooms. They encourage

children to choose and investigate their own preferences. Children learn to be busy, confident and friendly in the pleasant surroundings and warm relationships fostered by the adults. If any problems occur, staff have a quiet word of advice and support. When children reach a certain stage of maturity, teachers expect them to "sort out your differences", based on accepted patterns of behaviour. When reception children join older children, for instance in assemblies, their behaviour is very good. Teachers track the children's growing maturity well, and record their observations carefully. If any children have special difficulty in adjusting, staff make special 'behaviour plans', for instance, 'to be able to share a task with an adult for three minutes'. These methods are effective over time. The key success of the Foundation Stage is that, at the end, children's attitude to learning is very good.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make good progress in their language development.
- Teaching is good and leads to good achievement.

Commentary

57. The strength in the good teaching is the way staff draw out language from virtually every activity. In the play activities, ideas are discussed and the teachers model the words and phrases. Nursery children get many opportunities for making marks on paper or whiteboard that imitates the teachers'. By the time they reach the reception class they are interested in sounds and letters, and teachers build on this to show them how to form the letters accurately and join them to make words.

58. Teaching is consistently good. Teachers plan work very precisely to meet the needs of all the children. They are very supportive of children who have special educational needs, and challenging for the higher attaining children. Even in a single lesson, teachers expect children to move forward by measurable amounts. For instance, in the guided reading sessions, children build up skills that can be transferred to writing. They learn how words fit together to make sentences. Children are proud of their new skills, and often choose writing in favour of other play activities. The new assessment system is geared to help teachers select the activities the children need next to move them through the later stepping stones to learning. Children's listening skills are well developed through a range of lively stories told in a lively, engaging way. Children get many opportunities to speak, but do not always respond in full sentences. To address this, the co-ordinator is initiating a new programme devoted to oracy, to help children overcome the problems children have in speaking. Though still well below the average standard, the children's attainment in language is a good achievement, as children enter the nursery with very low levels of communication skills.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make good progress in their mathematical development.
- The teaching is good; teachers plan very effectively.

Commentary

59. Teachers plan very effectively. They achieve a very good balance between the skill teaching sessions and the wider continuous activities set out around the classroom, where children can explore and investigate. Children listen well and, in the nursery, enjoy number rhymes enormously. These help to fix the names and size of the numbers in their memories. They learn about measuring and shape with interesting materials that capture their attention, for instance the sand and water trays. By pouring and digging they judge what fits into what, and smaller and larger amounts. They start nursery at a low level, compared with average levels nationally. They make good progress, and by the end of their time there they are entering the early stepping stones of learning. Further good progress through reception enables the children to get nearer to the early learning goals. This is a good achievement. The slightly more formal approach in reception suits the children because they are ready for the increased challenge. They enjoy counting to 'big numbers'. When they reach a hundred a cheer goes up. They also enjoy the structured play activities, where they can explore number and shape around the classroom, but do not get much chance to investigate larger areas outside. Teachers are currently getting children to think about estimating size and numbers, but not involving them enough in solving practical problems.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make good progress in developing their knowledge of the wider world.
- Teaching is good.

Commentary

60. Teachers use the accommodation and resources well to produce a stimulating environment for children. They give children good practical opportunities to feel and handle material, in and out of the classroom. For instance, the nursery children were full of awe and wonder when making and chasing bubbles around their playground. Reception children were equally curious about the stuff in the 'gloop' trays, but not too sure if they liked it. 'Lesson' explanations are very clear, friendly and informal, and draw well on the children's own experiences. Much of the work centred on the recent farm visit. Clearly this had made a deep impression, because they were eager to talk about it. The follow-up activities are interesting and build on what the children have seen and heard. The nursery children study more animals in class. Rex the rabbit was an instant hit, and helped children to learn about care and feeding, babies and growth. Reception children studied farm habitats, and used Lego to design and build homes for various animals. This is good teaching.

61. Planning is very thorough and gives a good balance to elements of history, geography, science, design and technology and religious education. Photographs show the range of visits the children make, and visitors who come to extend the children's experience. The children's standards at the start of the nursery are very low, but they make good progress and are nearer to reaching the expected levels by the end of the reception year. This represents good achievement in relation to their starting points.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **very good** in the nursery and **good** in reception.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make good progress overall.
- The teaching is good, with very good planning.

Commentary

62. The nursery teachers make the most of the outdoor play area, and do so successfully. Children love playing outside and the resources enable them to extend most of the classroom learning on a larger scale. Teachers also make very good use of the school hall so that children experience both the formal setting and the informal exploration of appropriate adventurous equipment. Teachers' planning is very good so that all activities have a purpose, to move children's physical potential on. This applies equally to large-scale movement and the smaller scale as children improve control of their fingers to manipulate a wide range of small tools and writing equipment. The assessment system is now capable of measuring the outcomes. Observing the more confident skills of reception children indicates that they have reached the expected levels of large physical movement, a very good achievement, but are still well below the average in fine finger control.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make good progress in a good range of creative and play activities.
- Good teaching provides some very good opportunities to develop children's creative skills and language development.

Commentary

63. Teachers plan very well to provide a rich experience on which children can draw to stimulate their imaginations. The role-play situations draw out children's language well as they imagine themselves running the vet's surgery in the home corner, or exploring the small world toys. They share ideas and create new ones, sometimes inventing their own language to do so. A strong area is speaking, since the reception teacher allocates time for the nursery nurse to help draw out the children's language. The children develop an inclination to explore colour imaginatively. They enjoy music and are often humming and singing contentedly to themselves. They observe the materials the teachers have provided for craft activities, and by the end of the year add their own stamp of inventiveness, for instance in the masks they create. Their standard is considerably below average on entry to nursery. By the end of reception they are more confident in their own ideas. They are still quite a way off the expected levels of the early learning goals, but their progress is good and represents a good achievement.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Co-ordination and analysis of the subject provision and standards are good.
- Standards have improved and pupils achieve well.
- Consistently good teaching and a curriculum that values pupils' independence are strengths.
- Teachers are providing pupils with very good learning strategies.
- In some lessons pupils do not get enough time to write at sufficient length for teachers to assess the progress made.
- Pupils do not always know the progress they make in terms of levels they are working at.

Commentary

64. The school has responded well to the decline in standards since the previous inspection. Under the strong leadership of the headteacher the co-ordinating team has been restructured. This team, with the help of the local education authority, has gathered suitable data to enable it to analyse the reasons for the low standards. The analysis has prompted a comprehensive programme of action to address the issues raised. The action taken is proving effective and standards are rising. Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are still below the national average, but much better than the very low standards of recent years. This represents a good achievement by pupils given their low starting point on entry to the school. The school is committed to inclusion. The arrangements made for pupils who have special educational needs, and the gifted and talented pupils, enable them to achieve equally well. They work in an atmosphere where they are challenged but sensitively supported.
65. Teaching is consistently good. Teachers work hard to encourage pupils to explore a wider range of reading material than before, and to use this experience to strengthen their writing. Pupils understand different genres in literacy. Boys show a growing interest in reading since the school has increased the range of library books to appeal to them. Year 2 pupils were entranced by "Six Dinner Sid", while Year 6 pupils are thoughtful about the dilemmas in "The Street Child". Boys respond particularly well in lessons, as they realise that teachers value their ideas and opinions. This is building their sense of independence well, no less so for the girls. For instance, in a Year 6 lesson on multiple-choice stories, it was the lively debate about what principles were involved that formed the stimulus for pupils' interest and effort. From the nursery upward teachers strive to give pupils a sense of ownership of their activities. Where teachers are particularly adept at motivating pupils who might easily be discouraged from reading and writing, the teaching is very good. Role-play and drama feature in this, and the co-ordinators' action plan stresses the need to expand this through the school, linked to a new boost for raising speaking skills.
66. Teachers are putting powerful learning tools such as guide sheets for particular styles of writing, reference books and the thesaurus into the pupils' hands. They consistently encourage pupils to 'look at the text'. Teachers go out of their way to give pupils very good guidance, for instance with detailed, helpful comments in marking English work. This raised expectation is part of the new, purposeful learning ethos of the school, where pupils are developing a strong pride in their work.
67. Teachers feel they have so much to give at the beginning of lessons that their enthusiasm runs away with them which limits the time pupils need to put enough on paper to show how much progress they have made from one level to the next. Pupils are intrigued by levels, but at present they do not have a clear view of what is involved in this process. Consequently they do not always have a clear understanding of the progress they make.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

68. Teachers provide a good range of systematically planned opportunities for pupils to practise and use their language skills in other subjects. For instance, Year 1 pupils learned a new genre of writing and labelling diagrams because it was linked to their work on growing beans in science. It embraces creativity as well as just recording; for instance in a Year 5 religious lesson pupils linked their new knowledge about the native American's 'Dreamcatchers' with the writing of their own best and worst dreams. The new technology in the school is boosting the boys' interest in reading and writing. They are fascinated by the computer-projected text and strain to read it. All pupils get good opportunities to key in some of their writing. Wisely, teachers use this to encourage pupils to see it as part of a drafting process in which pupils are not frightened to make mistakes.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in mathematics are rising.
- Good use is made of ICT to aid pupils' learning.
- There is good support for lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs.
- Pupils' ability to use and apply mathematics is not as well developed as other aspects of their work.
- Pupils use specific mathematical language well.

Commentary

56. Standards have fallen since the last inspection. In the 2003 national tests standards were well below average. Standards have improved recently and are now below average at Year 2 and Year 6. Achievement is good from the low baseline of attainment pupils have on entry. This improvement in standards is due to increased provision, good teaching and strong leadership of the subject. Pupils with special educational needs work at a suitable level to their ability and, with good support, achieve well. Mathematics enjoys a high profile in school and the attractive displays around the school support pupils' learning effectively.
57. Teaching and learning are good overall with some very good teaching. Pupils enjoy their lessons and show very positive attitudes to mathematics. Teachers plan and deliver interesting lessons with a challenging style that engages and keeps the attention of pupils. They explain ideas clearly, using the correct mathematical language, and pupils quickly become familiar with new words and use them correctly. Teachers are very positive about pupils' abilities and this raises pupils' self-esteem and encourages them to try harder. Teachers ensure those lower attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs benefit from further explanations from teaching assistants working in small groups. Pupils finding mathematics particularly difficult also benefit from taking some of their lessons in the school's special educational needs unit for part of the day.
58. ICT is used well to support learning, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Teachers use large interactive displays generated by a computer to illustrate mathematical ideas clearly and to present a range of situations in which understanding can be developed and problems solved. For example, pupils in Year 6 answer their challenging questions with growing understanding by extracting and interpreting the information from tables and graphs displayed on the screen. However, generally, pupils' ability throughout the school to use and apply their knowledge and understanding is not as well developed as some areas of their learning. This sometimes means that pupils are less confident in the problem-solving aspect of their work.

59. Leadership and management of the subject are good. A team of three teachers, who work together well, lead the subject. They have a positive approach to mathematics with a determination to drive the subject forward. Professional development is focused on school priorities so that teaching and learning improve. Challenging, individual and group targets are set and assessments of how well pupils are doing are regularly and thoroughly made. However, this information is not always used well enough to give teachers a clear picture of each pupil's rate of progress as they move up the school.

Mathematics across the curriculum

60. Numeracy is used well to aid pupils' learning in other subjects and to extend their understanding of numbers and how to use them. In science, for example, pupils frequently use measuring instruments whilst investigating and record the information they collect in tables. They use their ICT skills to present data in charts and graphs. Measuring skills are used well in design and technology lessons and symmetry enhances pupils' work in art.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and, as a result, learning is good.
- Pupils achieve well although standards are below the national average.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good.
- There has been a good improvement since the last inspection.
- Science is well managed across the school.

Commentary

61. Standards overall are below the national average. This is the same for pupils in both key stages. However, standards by the end of Key Stage 2 are not as low as indicated by the results of the national tests in 2003. For example, in a very well taught Year 6 lesson where pupils were investigating factors affecting the size of bubbles, attainment was in line with the national average; indeed, higher attaining pupils standards were above average. In this lesson pupils observed very carefully and showed good scientific skills in their experiments. They were able to record findings accurately and to draw very sensible conclusions. In a Year 3/4 lesson where pupils were looking at living creatures, attainment was also in line with the national average, showing appropriate observational and recording skills.
62. Pupils achieve well. A significant number of pupils throughout the school have individual and special needs. These needs are well catered for and all pupils, whatever the standards they attain in relation to national standards, achieve well and make good progress.
63. Teaching is good overall with some lessons being very well taught. Again, this is the same in both key stages. Planning is very good, especially notable features being the joint planning between teachers and the very good teamwork between teachers and support staff. Relationships between adults and pupils are very good and pupils are very well cared for and appropriately challenged. Teachers have high expectations and manage classes and individual pupils very well. Quite a number of pupils have behavioural difficulties and teachers are very good at ensuring that these pupils are very well managed and keep on task, not disrupting the work of others. These factors ensure lessons run smoothly and that all pupils are secure and very well supported. As a direct result of good teaching pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good, learning is good and pupils make good progress.

64. Teachers make good use of ICT in their teaching and in pupils' learning. Interactive whiteboards and projected computer images are well used in lesson introductions, to set the scene and to clearly explain points. Pupils make good use of ICT in their experiments, for example for data logging, as in the Year 5 lesson where pupils measured light intensity and the relationship between this and where woodlice like to live, and in recording and presenting data, for example in their use of tables of results and graphs.
65. Subject management is good and is bringing about improvement in provision across the school. The school has recognised the need to improve the quality of pupils' experimental and investigative work and their ability to draw conclusions. As a result new approaches have been implemented and standards are being driven up. Assessment of pupils' work is thorough and well implemented across the school. However, the school is aware of a need to further develop the tracking of individual pupils' progress as they move through the school to ensure that any variations in performance are noted at an early stage and appropriate action taken.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been a good level of improvement since the last inspection.
- Standards are improving rapidly although they remain below average.
- Teaching is good overall and results in good learning. Teamwork between adults is very good.
- Resources are very good.
- Leadership and management are good and are rapidly improving the quality of teaching, learning and standards.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good when using ICT.

Commentary

66. The school has made substantial strides in the development of its facilities for ICT since the last inspection. The ICT suite, which is timetabled for all classes, is very well equipped and has space for pupils to do associated written and research work when appropriate. The use of the suite is having a significant effect on standards, and, although these are still below the national average by the end of both key stages, they are improving.
67. Attainment overall, throughout both key stages, is below the national average. However, in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils make good progress and achieve well. There are a significant number of pupils identified as having special needs and, although the overall attainment of this group is well below average, they too achieve well. In some lessons, for example an observed Year 5 ICT lesson on graphical modelling, standards were in line with the national average. In this lesson on planning a room, pupils knew how to use the software and many were confident enough to use shortcuts and more advanced aspects of the program, copying and repeat pasting objects before repositioning them on the overall plan.
68. As a part of its ICT strategy, besides whole classes using the suite, the school has two bookable interactive whiteboard rooms. These are in addition to interactive whiteboards in use in timetabled classrooms. These facilities complement the ICT suite and allow teachers to use these valuable resources when they need to teach large groups and whole classes, especially in other subjects, for example mathematics. This strategy is having a noticeable positive effect on pupils' ICT standards, not only in ICT lessons but also in other subjects.
69. Teaching is good throughout the school. Lessons are very well planned, with joint planning, between teachers who job share and those who teach same age classes, being a notable and very good feature. Teaching in the ICT suite is very well organised with a clear focus on the

development of pupils' skills. Often the use of ICT is put into the context of other subjects, for example English, mathematics and science.

70. Teamwork between teachers and supporting staff is very good and contributes very significantly to the good level of pupils' achievement. This is especially evident in the large number of classes where there are a high percentage of pupils with special educational needs. Support staff play a full and invaluable part in lessons, having a good knowledge of the lesson content and of pupils' individual needs. Relationships between all adults and pupils are very good, and sometimes excellent. This is a very important factor which ensures pupils are in a secure environment and want to try hard.
71. Teacher expertise in the use of ICT is good overall. In some lessons, for example the Year 5 lesson where pupils were using graphical modelling to make a plan of their classroom, expertise was of a high level, resulting in very good learning and pupil progress. Very confident knowledge and use of the software, use of a laser pointer and the way in which the teacher used a pupil as an integral part of the demonstration all combined to give a very clear lesson introduction which motivated and challenged pupils.
72. Very good teaching results directly in very good learning. Pupils make good use of previously learned skills and knowledge in their ICT lessons. The level of concentration is good and they are enthusiastic about using ICT. Their attitudes to the subject, other pupils and to adults are very good, as is behaviour in ICT lessons.
73. Subject leadership is good. ICT is well managed throughout the school. The co-ordinator has a high level of personal skill in ICT as well as teaching very good lessons. This combination inspires other teachers and support staff and is an important factor in developing teachers' confidence throughout the school. Good management has ensured that the provision and resources for ICT are very good across the school and that ICT is becoming an important part of lessons in many subjects.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

74. ICT is well used throughout the school. It is an important element in a wide range of subjects. A new computer-aided learning program is being used in Year 5. This helps pupils, especially those with special needs, improve their skills in mathematics and English. During the inspection good use was made of subject-specific software, for example measuring light levels in science, as well as the use of word processing and graphics. Good use of ICT was seen in mathematics, English and science lessons. The interactive whiteboards in the bookable rooms were very well used as a teaching tool in many subjects.

HUMANITIES

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievements are satisfactory throughout the school, and at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.
- The subject is well led by an experienced co-ordinator.
- The quality of teaching is good overall and sometimes very good.
- The subject contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development and as a result pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong.
- The use of ICT is developing well.

Commentary

75. Standards are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and achievement in lessons is good. By the end of Year 2, for example, pupils have a good understanding of Hinduism including practices for worship at home. They have an understanding of special places of worship including church and synagogue.
76. The elements of very good teaching seen in Year 2 were characterised by very good attitudes, behaviour and very good use of role-play to deepen the understanding of friendship. Pupils were able to undertake well-planned activities to relate the concept of friendship to their everyday experiences.
77. Religious education contributes very positively to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils gain insights into world faiths, the meaning of right and wrong and the value of working together to create a better world.
78. Leadership and management of the subject are very good and there is a comprehensive range of resources to support the curriculum. Assessment is good throughout school. Pupils are assessed against National Curriculum levels after each module and records are passed on to the next teacher. Plans are monitored comprehensively and feedback is given to individual teachers who modify plans as appropriate. ICT is being well used to develop learning in this subject and is prioritised for future development. The co-ordinators have a very good understanding of how to maintain and improve standards in religious education. Improvement in the subject has been good since the last inspection.
79. During the inspection it was possible to observe only one history lesson. No geography lessons were observed. However, from a review of pupils' work in their books, from talking to a number of pupils and from a review of display and pupils' work in classrooms etc, it is clear that both history and geography are taught throughout the school and that the requirements of the National Curriculum are met. In both subjects the work available shows that, although standards are below the national average, pupils are making at least sound progress and achieving appropriately.

History

80. In the history lesson observed, pupils made good progress in their understanding of the lifestyle of a range of people in Tudor times. They showed an appropriate awareness of time scale and facts about life and conditions of ordinary people. A significant number of pupils showed, through their answers to questions and their eagerness to describe conditions in Tudor times, that they had retained many of the facts from their previous lesson on this topic.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

81. Due to timetable structure only one art lesson was observed. Judgements are therefore largely based on scrutiny of work and display and discussion with pupils.
82. At the end of both key stages evidence shows that standards of attainment are in line with national expectations. The co-ordinators monitor plans to ensure coverage and progression and teacher assessments against National Curriculum levels are completed annually.
83. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are confident about how to mix lighter and darker shades and have developed their observational skills. One higher ability pupil is able to explain why he used chalk and smudged it to obtain a particular effect.

84. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils of all abilities are able to comment upon the development of their own artistic skills, as well as saying what they think and feel about the work of a range of artists including David Hockney, Clarice Cliffe, Kandinsky and Van Gogh whose styles they have recreated in their own work.

Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good opportunities for pupils to extend their design and technology skills in other subjects.
- Teaching is good.
- Pupils take considerable pride in their achievements.
- The basic skills of joining and combining materials are taught well.

Commentary

85. Standards of attainment are similar to those found at the last inspection and are in line with national expectations at Year 2 and Year 6. This represents good achievement for pupils.
86. By Year 6 pupils know the stages they need to go through to turn an initial idea into a complete and well-constructed product. They are proud of the things they have made. For example, pupils were keen to demonstrate their fairground models enhanced by flashing lights programmed on the computer. Pupils' achievements in Year 6 are built on the solid foundation that is laid further down the school, where pupils learn the skills of successfully joining a range of materials together in a variety of ways. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 explore everyday objects and their suitability for the intended task. They carefully examine a wide selection of torches and establish who would use them and why. Pupils enjoy their work in design and technology and their pride in their achievements is pronounced. The subject does much to enhance pupils' self-esteem.
87. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers share with pupils what they will learn. They set challenging tasks for all pupils and pupils make good progress and achieve well. Good links are made with other subjects so that new learning in one reinforces learning in another. A good example of this is how pupils' study of Africa inspired their designs for the attractive musical instruments, masks and jewellery on display.
88. The management of design and technology is good. Assessments are made of how well pupils are doing and teachers take good account of what stage pupils have reached and plan the next steps to enable pupils to develop their skills.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The features of the very good and excellent teaching observed are characterised by the excellent subject knowledge of the specialist teachers and their high expectations of pupil performance.
- A wide range of music enrichment activities enhances pupils' development in music.
- All pupils enjoy their lessons and make at least good progress in lessons.
- Pupils from the special needs unit are not always able to be fully included.

Commentary

89. Standards in music are satisfactory overall. Pupils make very good progress in lessons. For example, by the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have made good progress in singing songs with an increasing range of difficulty. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are able to sing songs with a range of expression and good articulation to create mood and image. Pupils are able to give considered opinions about a range of musical styles and are clear about their preferences.
90. The excellent teaching in Key Stage 2 singing was characterised by clear explanation, with modelling by the teacher about how to improve performance. Pupils were able to make very good progress in the standard of singing performance they achieved. The very good practical work in Year 6 enabled the pupils to understand that non-pitched instruments could not be used to play a melody.
91. The wide range of musical enrichment activities, including choir, instrumental teaching and a visit to the Liverpool Philharmonic, enables pupils to develop a love of music and incorporate it into their leisure time.

Physical education

92. Only one lesson was observed in physical education. It is therefore not possible to form an overall judgement about provision and teaching and the subject was sampled. However, from a study of the planning, co-ordinator's records and pupils' own impressions it is possible to state that pupils experience a satisfactory curriculum. The lesson observed contained many positive features in planning and good relationships. It indicated that teachers are aware of the need for fast pace and good progression throughout one session.
93. The range of activities is appropriate and includes games, dance, gymnastics and swimming for the older pupils. The co-ordinator's action plan is good and highlights the need to place athletics at a more suitable time in the year. The curriculum is well enriched by a wide variety of sports experiences, and pupils who have not yet been on the 'activity weeks' are looking forward to abseiling and kayaking. Staff and pupils are excited by the prospect of the opening of the 'Sports Barn' on the school site. In order to get the best value from this exciting new facility, the co-ordinator is wisely making provision for further staff training.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

94. Pupils' education and personal development in this area is a high priority for the school. Pupils' understanding of the impact of their actions on others is a major component of the school's provision in order to develop a harmonious and well-ordered community in which pupils can thrive.
95. To this end pupils are provided with very good opportunities to develop in personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship. The PSHE curriculum is well structured and the timetable includes sessions for circle time where pupils engage in discussions that develop their ability to consider the feelings of others, listen carefully to others' point of view and develop their social skills. These sessions are supported by the development of citizenship through subject lessons and through the school's involvement in a range of community activities. A Citizenship award is made termly and pupils' personal qualities are highlighted in displays around the school.
96. The school council is a very active and important part of school life. Pupils take their roles and responsibilities very seriously and with it develop their personal confidence and self-esteem.

97. Pupils develop social skills and their understanding of their and others' actions on the life and running of the school as a community. The interaction and high profile of all these aspects develop pupils' understanding of their responsibilities of living in a community and of the impact of their actions on others, both positively and negatively, and is a very good preparation for citizenship in the outside world.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

| <i>Inspection judgement</i> | <i>Grade</i> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| The overall effectiveness of the school | 3 |
| How inclusive the school is | 2 |
| How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection | 3 |
| Value for money provided by the school | 3 |
| Overall standards achieved | 3 |
| Pupils' achievement | 3 |
| Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities | 2 |
| Attendance | 4 |
| Attitudes | 2 |
| Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions | 3 |
| Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 3 |
| The quality of education provided by the school | 3 |
| The quality of teaching | 3 |
| How well pupils learn | 3 |
| The quality of assessment | 3 |
| How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs | 3 |
| Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities | 3 |
| Accommodation and resources | 3 |
| Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety | 3 |
| Support, advice and guidance for pupils | 3 |
| How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's links with parents | 3 |
| The quality of the school's links with the community | 3 |
| The school's links with other schools and colleges | 2 |
| The leadership and management of the school | 3 |
| The governance of the school | 3 |
| The leadership of the headteacher | 2 |
| The leadership of other key staff | 3 |
| The effectiveness of management | 3 |

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).